

Resource Family Connection

News, Events and Information Benefiting the Children of Waukesha County July / August, 2016



Why I Do It By: Bette Winkler, Waukesha County Foster Parent For 12 Years

I recently read an interview of a long-time foster parent who was asked why she did it. She replied "Because of the unconditional love I get from the kids." Although we do get love from most of the kids we accept into our home, that isn't the only reason I do it.

We foster parents are passionate about kids. We cringe when we witness the stressed mom pulling her son's ear in the parking lot or grabbing a little arm way too roughly when urging a little one to walk faster. We are repulsed with stories about child abuse and neglect, and we lie awake at night thinking about the ones who've been sex trafficked. We foster because we want to help these kids have a better life; we want to help if we can.

There are, of course, challenges that come with the territory. There is a stress on the marriage and family, much less free time, the financial drain of providing for the foster kids, wear and tear on the family home and possessions, and of course, the many, many miles added to the car odometer for all of the appointments, home visits, and court appearances. But yet, we continue to do it for the kids. We realize the need for good foster homes and for the commitment to shared parenting so that the goal of eventual reunification can be a reality.

If you're reading this newsletter, you already know that the need for foster homes in Waukesha County is great, and the need is especially crucial for teens. I have chosen to foster teens for the majority of my years with Waukesha County for many reasons, and I'd like to encourage you to consider this age group also. First of all, it is a privilege to help the teen transition to adulthood and to independent living. With this, of course, we are not alone. Besides the social worker, there is an independent living coordinator employed by the county who is terrific at helping the kids learn to cook, search for an apartment, job search, sign leases, balance a checking

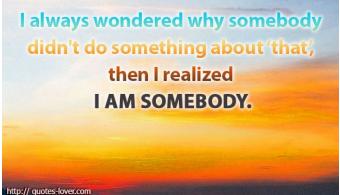
account, etc. She holds groups classes where the teens can work on these skills together, and she is also willing to work with the kids one-onone. A second reason I choose to foster teens is the companionship and guidance I can offer. Not that my lifestyle and values are better or more important that anyone else's, but many of these kids have lived their lives without much role modeling needed for a better future. We are able to provide both the role modeling and the guidance to help ensure their success as adults. I am very proud that I was able recently to attend the high school graduation of our foster daughter. She shared that she was the first in her family going back four generations to attain a high school diploma, and she said she stuck it out because of my encouragement and my faith in her. I am also very proud of the fact that

a few years ago, the biological mom of our foster son finished her GED, at least partially I'd like to think, because of our influence.

I always tell my foster kids that I want for them the same as I want for my biological kids - to first of all be good people who are kind to and respectful of others, and to be contributing members of society who are able to care for themselves and also give back to their community. My job, as I see it, is to change, just a little, the pattern they've grown up with, and it is so rewarding to see this happen. With the older kids, there is not much time. But each small step helps. Each of

these kids touch our lives, and we, in turn, touch theirs. Even if it's a little bit, that might be all they need to make a better life for themselves. Please consider looking again at your preferred age preference, and think about expanding yours to accept a teen into your home. I think you'll be happy you did!

If you have any questions or would like to talk about fostering older kids, I'd love to talk with you about this exciting opportunity. Please feel free to call me at 262-679-9634 or e-mail me at bwinkler1@wi.rr.com.



Required Prudent Parenting Training For All Licensed Foster Parents and Placement Providers

The Federal Legislation referred to as the Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act of 2014 required the State of Wisconsin to move towards requiring a "Reasonable and Prudent Parenting Standard" for children placed in out-of-home care. This requires the use of the Reasonable and Prudent Parent Standard (RPPS) be used to allow a child placed in out-of-home care to be able to participate in age and developmentally-appropriate activities. As a part of this standard, it requires that Out-of-Home Care providers have specific mandatory RPPS training.

Waukesha County will provide several training opportunities for this to occur. We must have all Out-Of-Home Care Providers trained by the end of August, 2016. The training will be two hours in length, and will count to towards your annual training requirement.

Please RSVP for a selected training via one of the following links:

For two training dates with dinner & daycare, please use the following link to RSVP:

https://prudentparentingwithdaycare.eventbrite.com

To see the listing of 14 other opportunities, please use the following link to RSVP: https://prudentparenting.eventbrite.com

If you have not RSVP'd for a training by July 1st, we will be contacting you to determine what the barriers are from attending as this is a state mandated requirement of all foster parents and providers who currently have an Out-of-Home Care placement.

** This training is not required for Voluntary Kinship Placements **

Supporting the Emotional Healing of the Children in Your Care By: Foster Care and Adoption Resource Center

One of the most important and ever-present jobs of a foster parent is to help children heal from past traumas and emotional difficulties. Wounds from past negative events can act like invisible barriers to emotional connection. This can be especially true for the kids we care for, who may have entered our families as a result of past wounds. Unlocking these past events - exploring and acknowledging them - can help the child in your care break cycles of negative self-esteem, negative projections on others, and behaving toward the ones the love in ways they are not proud of.

Children and youth process their emotions in very unique ways. They tend to explore themselves and the world around them through their senses, through creative expression, and through their social connections. Emotional healing varies from child to child, depending on their cognitive development, the adverse experiences they have had, and what coping skills they may or may not have developed.

The best way to be a support person in a child's journey of emotional healing is to be creative and open, while recognizing that the child is an individual and that there are no one-size-fits-all solutions. Working as part of a team with school staff, medical personnel, and social workers, will ensure consistency for the child and help to maintain a clearer sense of what is in the child's best interest. You are an important advocate for the child in your care, so please be sure to share your insight and perspective.

Emotional healing can be looked at as a holistic process with many moving parts. Following are some steps you may want to consider in helping the children in your care heal from emotional wounds.

- When you talk with the child in your care about the hurts in his
 or her past, let him or her know that it is ok to feel the grief and
 pain associated with those past memories. Share with the child
 that those feelings are important parts of healing and that they
 will pass.
- During times of healing, it is important for the child in your care
 to do things that make him or her feel good and are meaningful.
 Help the child identify the activities he or she enjoys and that
 make him or her feel alive and happy. Finding ways to be
 thoughtfully kind and gentle to oneself, while rooting down into
 routine and meaning, is a key component of the healing
 process.
- Let the child know he or she is not alone. You can help the child in your care identify people that he or she can talk to who he or she trusts. It could be a therapist, a close relative, a teacher, or, of course, you! A therapist can help guide the child along a safe and productive path to healing. A therapist can also help support you as you support the child. It's also important that the child in your care knows you are there for him or her. Be sure to ask the child what he or she needs from you and be prepared if he or she cannot exactly articulate his or her needs. As he or she heals, it is important that the child has people in his or her corner that help him or her feel understood. You may need to help the child identify who that is for him or her, and help him or her connect to those individuals. He or she may feel awkward at times, and you may need to help him or her develop his or her comfort. Over time, you can help the child develop an inner voice of kindness that helps him or her believe he or she is worthy of care and concern from people he or she is close to.

Practice patience with the process. Emotional healing takes time and the child in your care may lost patience and become frustrated. You can help by reminding him or her to take it easy, be patient, and remember how far he or she has come. Help the child think about what the future may bring when he or she is in a better place of wellness, after taking on the hard work of healing.

In order to help the children you care for through their emotional hurts and the healing process, you may find the following "tools" helpful to keep in your foster parenting toolkit:

- Consistency and structure in daily life
- Firm but fair rules and boundaries
- Open lines of communication between all caregivers/trusted adults
- Physical activity to expend excess energy and release "feel good" brain chemicals
- Developing daily living skills
- Individual and/or group therapy
- A nutritious diet
- Creative activities
- Spiritual activities
- Reading books with healing themes
- Interactions with animals
- Time exploring and experiencing the peace and wonder of nature
- Modeling healthy emotional expression

Emotional healing is a lifelong journey. The children you care for will make sense of their pasts in new ways for many years to come. As a foster parent, you can make all the difference in helping them to expand their coping skills tool box to offer a less bumpy road along the way.

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Pocket Pal Quilt Ministry Ann Gainey



Pocket Pal Quilt Ministry began after I read The Lost Boy by David Pelzer. It is his true story of when he was a foster child, and had only a brown grocery bag in which to place his few precious belongings as he was shuffled from foster home to foster home. This story stayed with me, and I began making guilts for homeless children. A conversation with my pastor, while in Arizona. initiated this ministry with the Arizona Foster Child agency. I started the Pocket Pal Quilt Ministry at this Arizona church. I

introduced the Pocket Pal Quilt idea to members at my home church, Norway Lutheran Church in Wind Lake, WI, and with their enthusiastic support, we began making these quilts for foster children in southeastern Wisconsin.

The Pocket Pal Quilts are 45° x 60° with a pocket 16° x 20° on the back of the quilt. The pocket is large enough to store the child's precious belongings if the child is shuffled from home to home. The pocket has a Velcro closure so that nothing falls out of the pocket. There is a name tag on the pocket, and the child's first name is written on the name tag so that the quilt remains with the child. The quilts are cozy, colorful, and made with the child's gender and age in mind when putting the quilts together.

Each quilt takes 20-30 hours to put together and costs about \$30 each. This ministry is supported by the Pocket Pal Quilters, the Norway Lutheran Church endowment fund, and donations.

Balloon Launch

On May 31, we held a balloon launch at Waukesha County Human Services to recognize Foster Care Appreciation Month! We released 117 balloons, representing the number of children in foster care in Waukesha County. We would like to thank all of our foster parents for their dedication and compassion for caring for our foster care children.









The Clothing Closet is Busting at the Seams!!!



The Clothing Closet is running out of room with donations of infant and toddler clothing. Pictured here are the racks and bins of clothing we have for families! Our wonderful volunteer, Carrie, has gone



through the clothing to assure you that all the clothing is in good condition with no stains or imperfections. We have some really nice things in there, and many items still have store tags on them!! We are hoping that Kinship and Foster Families will use this resource. Please contact

Linda Finn, one of our Human Services Support Specialists, at 262-548-7254, to arrange a personal appointment to come in and "shop" in the clothing closet!









Annual Resource Family Picnic

Date: Saturday, July 23rd, 2016 **Time:** 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM

Where: Minooka Park, Picnic Area 1

Games, crafts, face painting, and make-your-own tie-dye

t-shirt! Lunch will be provided!

For all foster care, relative care, and kinship care providers!

Please RSVP by July 15th at

https://resourcefamilypicnic.eventbrite.com



Training and Events

Parent Café

Parent Café's are an educational opportunity for parents to come together and deal with the stressors, worries and challenges of parenting in a supportive environment.

October 4, December 6, 2016 5:30 PM - 8:00 PM Center for Excellence N4W22000 Bluemound Road, Waukesha To register for childcare, RSVP or for questions call, 262-521-0317.

Support Group For Dads

This is a new group to enhance group members' experience as fathers. Topics of discussion will include coping with stress; developing a better relationship with partner/spouse/child's mother; identifying positive role models in your life; identifying how you are a positive role model for your child(ren); discussing your role as a father and what you would like to change or improve.

Fourth Tuesday of each month July 26, 2016 August 23, 2016 6:00PM - 7:30PM Parents Place

1570 E. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI 262-549-5575

Mindful Parent = Happy Child

Mindfulness is a key element in happiness and proven to improve wellbeing, physically and mentally. Children also benefit from developing this relaxation state. Research has linked mindfulness practice to a decrease in temper tantrums and night terrors. The first week will focus on parents, while the second week, parents and children will be doing hands-on interactive activities.

Tuesdays, August 16 & 23, 2016 5:30 - 7:00 P.M. Parents Place

1570 E. Moreland Blvd, Waukesha

Call to register at 262-549-5575. Complimentary childcare. Space is limited.

Waukesha County Foster Parent Orientation

Waukesha Department of Health and Human Services invites you to attend a foster parent orientation meeting. These meetings are open to anyone who is interested in learning about our foster care program. If you are currently in the process of becoming a licensed foster parent, you are required to attend an orientation session prior to approval of your foster care license.

We encourage you to complete the online foster parent pre-placement training prior to attending this information session. The training can be found online at http://wcwpds.wisc.edu/foster-parent-training/. Please save the certificates after you have completed each module. These are required to become licensed.

When:

Second Tuesday of each month July 12, 2016 August 9, 2016 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Where: Human Services Center, 514 Riverview Ave., Waukesha, WI 53188

To register for an orientation session, contact your foster care coordinator.

Training

Parents Place Programs 262-549-5575 www.ppacinc.org

- Kid's Anger (Parent and Child Class)
 Mondays, July 11 - 25; 5:30 - 7:30 PM
- Having Fun With Your Kids In The Kitchen (Parent and Child Class)
 Wednesdays, July 13 - August 24; 10:00 - 11:30 AM
- Love and Logic ®
 Mondays, August 1 22; 6:00 7:30 PM
- Adult Anger
 Tuesdays, August 2 16; 5:30 7:00 PM
- Co-Parenting Tuesdays, August 2 - 23; 5:30 - 7:00 PM

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Contact Numbers:

Waukesha County Health & Human Services 262-548-7212

Vickie Smith, Foster Care Licensing Supervisor 262-970-4761

Susan Peck, Foster Care Level 2 Coordinator 262-896-8574

Libby Sinclair, Relative Foster Care Level 1 Coordinator 262-548-7277

Megan Quandt, Kinship & Foster Care Coordinator 262-548-7373

Jessica Morris, Kinship & Foster Care Coordinator 262-548-7256

Eve Altizer, Ongoing Social Work Supervisor 262-548-7272

Rebecca Hollister, Ongoing Social Work Supervisor 262-548-7271

Social Workers:

Tracy Clark262-548-7270 Megan Fishler262-896-8570 Abbey Girman262-548-7695 Danita Graham262-548-7341 Laura Jahnke.....262-548-7359 Jamie Kasten.....262-548-7265 Becca Kuester.....262-896-6857 Jessica Larsen......262-548-7346 Maria Maurer.....262-548-7345 Chelsey Nisbet262-896-6896 Rachel O'Sullivan.....262-548-7639 Stacy Pawlak262-548-7262 Elizabeth Russo......262-548-7349 Kim Sampson.....262-548-7273 Linda Senger262-548-7698 Sara Waldron.....262-548-7371

Children's Mental Health Outreach 262-548-7666

Medical Emergency: 911 Family Emergency: 211 or 262-547-3388

Foster Parent Mentors David & Jen Mersfelder 262-542-2926

> If an Allegation of Abuse or Neglect has been made against you, please call:

> > FASPP Norma Schoenberg 920-922-9627



Foster Parent Support Group

First Wednesday of each month July 6, 2016 August 3, 2016 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM Parents Place 1570 E. Moreland Blvd., Waukesha, WI 262-549-5575

On-sight daycare is available, but you must register in advance to secure a slot as there may be a cut-off depending on the number of children.